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Central Intelligence Bulletin

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29 December 1967

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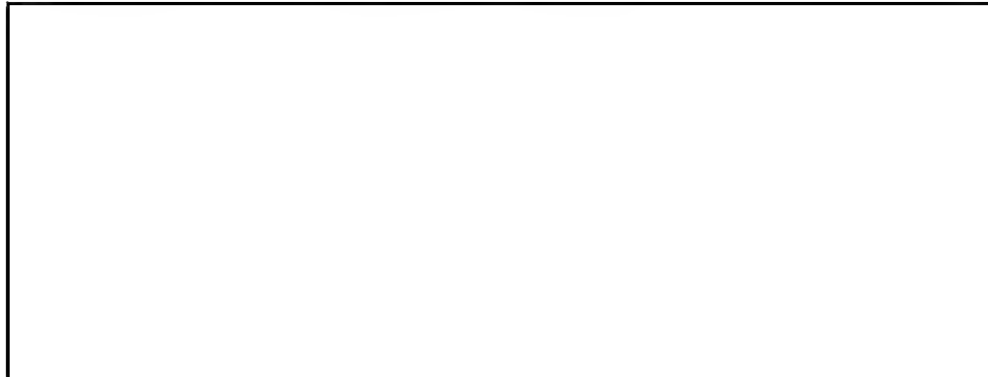
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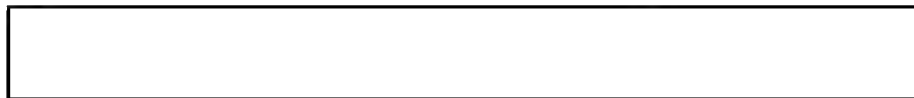
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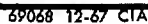
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Laos: Small-scale fighting (Page 5)

Rumania - USSR - Eastern Europe: Economic squeeze
on Bucharest (Page 5)



*Vietnam:

South Vietnam: Hostilities have resumed throughout the country following the Christmas cease-fire period.

A day-long battle took place in Phu Yen Province on 27 December. The fighting followed an airborne assault by US forces on suspected Communist positions north of the provincial capital at Tuy Hoa. The enemy troops, estimated to total two companies, were in well dug-in positions but were forced to withdraw after nine hours of extensive air and artillery bombardments.

Two other clashes occurred in Binh Duong Province on 27 December. Elements of the North Vietnamese 7th Division launched a mortar attack on a US base camp at Dau Tieng. A barrage of some 180 rounds of mortar fire was directed at the camp and was accompanied by small-arms fire. A two-hour skirmish also took place in the central part of the province when US troops engaged an undetermined-size Communist force while searching an enemy bunker complex.

North Vietnam: Hanoi continues to construct alternate facilities for crossing the Red River near the recently bombed Paul Doumer Bridge. Recent photography shows that two causeway-pontoon bridges are operational and a third is under construction. These bridges are believed capable of supporting a moderate level of truck traffic. They should be serviceable for several months, until they are washed out when the Red River returns to a higher level in about June. There are 12 other alternate crossings within five miles of the Doumer Bridge. /

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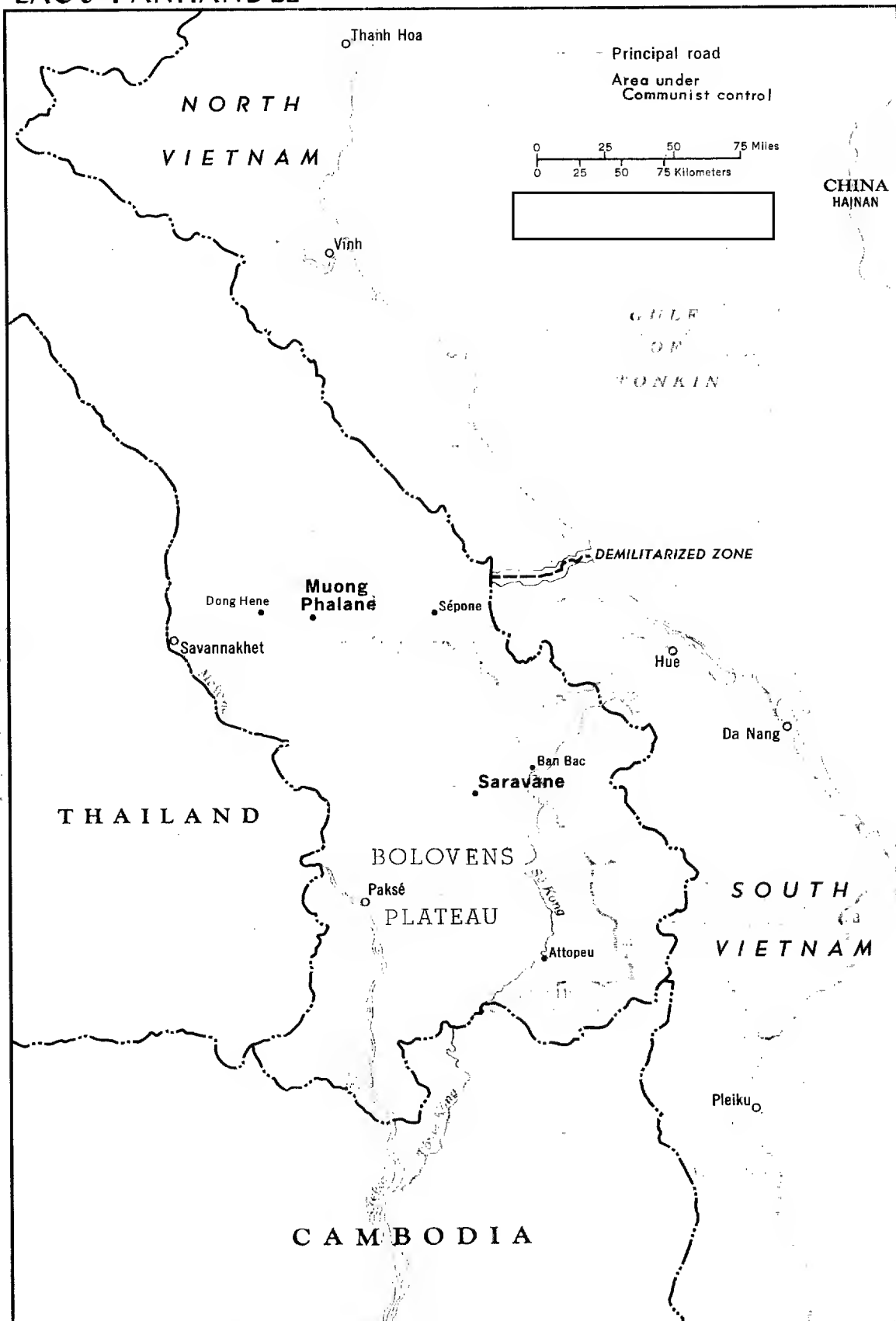
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LAOS PANHANDLE



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Laos: [Small-scale skirmishing is continuing in southern Laos, but there is still no indication that a major Communist offensive is under way. Government units recaptured Muong Phalane on 27 December, but the Communists are continuing to maintain pressure on government forces in the Bolovens Plateau area. Enemy forces have harassed a government position defending an access road into Saravane, but there does not appear to be any immediate threat against the town. So far the Communists appear to be content to tie down government forces in the area in an effort to disrupt any encroachment into the infiltration corridor.]

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Rumania - USSR - Eastern Europe: Rumania's economic difficulties with some of its European Communist allies probably have worsened. Moscow reportedly has "broken" a contract to purchase oil-drilling equipment, and Prague has canceled a large order for Rumanian-made railroad cars. Bucharest's disagreement with Moscow on various important international issues probably lies behind these actions.

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